

## DRAFT

### Skokomish Watershed Action Team General Meeting May 29, 2009 Mason Conservation District, Shelton WA

#### Attendees:

Lydia Wagner -- WA Dept of Ecology  
Marc Wicke and Paul Hickey -- Tacoma Power  
Martin Best -- Mason County  
Robin Stoddard, Kathy O'Halloran, Dean Yoshina – Olympic National Forest  
Allen Gibbs and Mary Carr – US Forest Service  
Sara Crumb – Congressman Dicks Office  
Alex Gouley and Ron Figlar-Barnes – Skokomish Tribe  
Rich Geiger, Keith Dublanica, Jon Bolender – Mason Conservation District  
Mali Krivor – Skokomish Farms  
Jayni Kamin – Skokomish Grange  
Ron Gold – RG Forestry  
Joe Caccero – Laird Norton Foundation  
Shelley Spalding – Olympic Forest Coalition  
Patti Case and Rick Schmelling – Green Diamond Resource Co.  
Jason Ragan – Taylor Shellfish Farms  
Luke Cherney – Hood Canal Coordinating Council  
Jeff Chapman – Back Country Horsemen/WA Trails Assoc.  
Mike Anderson – The Wilderness Society  
Bob Dick (“in spirit”)

#### Introductions:

Jon Bolender welcomed the group to the MCD offices. Mike Anderson said that Bob Dick was unable to attend due to illness but wanted us to know he was there “in spirit.” Mike and Allen Gibbs circulated a get-well card to Bob for SWAT signatures.

#### Climate Change Presentation:

Kathy O'Halloran introduced Jeremy Littell with the U. of Washington Climate Change Impacts Group. Jeremy gave a power-point presentation on the Group's extensive research, focusing on anticipated changes in temperature, precipitation and hydrology in the coming decades. We can expect wetter winters and drier summers, with significant decline in snowpack at lower elevations. There will be a strong increase in flood risks for river basins that have mixed snow and rain precipitation in winter. Skokomish River is expected to have higher rainfall and peak flows in late fall.

#### Cushman Settlement Update:

Marc Wicke gave a status report on the Cushman hydropower settlement agreement between Tacoma Power and Skokomish Tribe which they signed January 12. The agreement and proposed license have been submitted for final approval to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. They met with a FERC technical team on May 20-21

and received positive feedback, with only process changes suggested. All indications appear favorable for FERC approval by the end of 2009. In the meantime, TP is proceeding with implementation of the McTaggart Creek diversion removal. Replacement of two culverts with a bridge is scheduled to occur in July, followed by restoring flows into McTaggart Creek in August. Preliminary work has also begun on a new powerhouse and fish collection facility below the lower dam.

#### World Forestry Congress Exhibit:

Mary Carr and Robin Stoddard explained how the Skokomish case study will fit into the U.S. exhibit at the World Forestry Congress, which is taking place October 18-23 in Buenos Aires. Skokomish collaboration will be one of three case studies under the Restoration theme. The Forest Service has prepared a 42-slide powerpoint on the Skokomish, focusing on five projects: Flat Stewardship, Gibbons Creek, Cushman flows, Skabob Creek, and Skokomish estuary. The full show will have to be shortened to 15 slides for the Buenos Aires exhibit, but will be useful for other SWAT functions. The Congress will also have a speakers' bureau opportunity for 30-minute presentations of the case studies or other (non-case study) projects.

#### Olympic National Forest Activities for 2009:

Robin Stoddard reported that the Forest Service will be spending at least \$3.3 million on restoration work in the upper watershed this year ("things are humming"). The Forest Service has approved 28.5 miles of road remediation work in the Church-Brown-Steel creek watersheds. One contract will cover 9.4 miles of road decommissioning in the Church Creek area, and a second contract that will cover 4.8 miles of road decommissioning in Church Creek and 8 miles of level 1 road closure in Brown Creek. Funding sources include flood supplemental - \$1.0 million, ERFO/federal highways - \$1.0 million, Legacy Roads and Trails - \$1.1 million, USFS program - \$60K, and stewardship contracts - \$36K. In addition, the road stabilization and drainage upgrade work funded by the EPA Section 318 grant to the Tribe will be completed this summer and fall. The Forest Service will also be using Legacy Roads and Trails money to conduct out-year planning on 30-40 miles of road remediation, which will be "sprinkled" around the watershed (Pine, Cedar, Vance, etc.).

In addition, planning for the South Fork large wood project is proceeding, with the environmental assessment expected by the end of June, the decision notice in the fall, and implementation next summer. Funding of \$700K has been secured for the project, and an additional \$500K is being requested through NOAA stimulus funding.

Ron Figlar-Barnes complimented the Forest Service for doing a great job on the Rock Creek Road decommissioning last summer. The group discussed the possibility of posting an interpretive sign along the main road where it crosses Rock Creek. Jeff Chapman noted the importance of replacing four Skokomish trail bridges through the Legacy Roads and Trails funding.

#### Washington, DC Update:

Sara Crumb reported that Congress has appropriated \$50 million for the Legacy Roads and Trails program in FY 2009 (up from \$40 million in '08) and will likely receive similar funding in 2010, especially since the program is now included in the President's budget request. The Skokomish General Investigation has been funded at \$730K in 2009 and Congressman Dicks will seek \$700K for 2010. Mike reported on his testimony before Dicks' Interior appropriations hearing and visits to Forest Service and congressional staffs in April.

#### Gibbons Creek:

Rick Schmelling gave a presentation on the Gibbons Creek fish passage project, which is slated for construction this summer. The project involves replacing a 7-foot wide culvert (and 10,000 cubic feet of fill) with a 70-foot long bridge, which will provide access to 6,500 feet of stream habitat for anadromous fish. Funding sources are the SRFB (\$210K), Ecotrust/Whole Watershed Joint Venture (\$30K), and Green Diamond (\$100K, including \$70,000 for the bridge). The Forest Service is providing access across national forest lands for Lake Cushman residents, while the regular access road is closed. The group discussed timing of a SWAT field trip and concluded it would probably be best to plan a trip after the project is completed in late September or October. Kitsap Sun and other media may also be interested in visiting the project before and during construction.

#### Skokomish General Investigation:

Alex Gouley and Rich Geiger reported on some changes in the Corps of Engineers staffing of the G.I. Mamie Brouwer is moving to the Howard Henson Dam project, and Nancy Chin will be new project lead for Skokomish. The Corps is amending the program management plan to add the North Fork and is hiring a contractor to work on the baseline study. Work on the alternatives is scheduled to begin in Spring 2010. In the meantime, the Bureau of Reclamation will be looking at potential projects in Vance Creek during a visit on June 29. Funding for the G.I is currently in good shape: non-federal matching funds of \$740K have been secured for 2009 and 2010. Jayni Kamin asked whether there should be an accounting of the G.I. to see what we're getting for the money. Rich said that the money is all accounted for, but the Corps has strict policy on releasing G.I. data until they are ready. The group also discussed the possibility of taking the new Corps project manager and staff on a float trip this summer; Alex and Rich will check with the Corps.

#### Estuary/Nalley Island:

Rich Geiger described plans for completing Phase II of the Skokomish Estuary restoration project. The project entails removal of 90,000 cubic feet of dike material around Nalley Island at the mouth of the river. A temporary bridge will need to be installed to provide access to the island. If funding comes through in the next few weeks (either through NOAA stimulus or Puget Sound recovery funds), construction could begin on July 15 and conclude by the end of October.

#### Skokomish Farms:

Keith Dublanica introduced Mali Krivor, new owner of the Skokomish Farms (formerly Richert Ranch) property at the river confluence. In April, Skokomish Farms enrolled 70

acres of riparian land under the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, the largest CREP reserve in Mason County. Skokomish Farms plans to develop 19 home sites and practice organic farming on the other 500 acres. Mali said the SWAT would be welcome to visit the property, which has been called the “lynchpin to the health of Hood Canal.”

#### Grange Hall:

Jayni Kamin said the Skokomish Grange is trying to have the Grange Hall listed on the historic registry. They are doing lots of remodeling and painting to make it more useful for events. The group discussed ways to improve the Hall and make it a center for social/cultural/educational activities in the watershed. Ideas included having a Grange/SWAT work party, adding a cement porch, holding a summer festival (like Nisqually) with local young musicians, creating a logo, and building an interpretive site (“gateway to the watershed”). Jayni and Jason Ragan said they will follow-up on the work party idea.

#### Laird Norton Foundation:

Mike introduced Joe Caccero from Laird Norton Foundation and thanked him for awarding \$5000 grants to Wilderness Society and Mason Conservation District to support their SWAT work. Joe Caccero said the Foundation plans to request additional proposals this fall to support watershed restoration work in the Hood Canal area and has set aside \$80,000 for that purpose.

#### Monitoring:

Shelley Spalding reported that OFCO is organizing volunteer monitoring of closed roads in the South Forest, including some that were decommissioned during the 1990s.

#### Summer Field Trips and Activities:

During the course of the meeting, several ideas for summer field trips and other activities were discussed, as outlined below. The Steering Committee will continue this discussion, starting with its monthly meeting on June 3, and will notify the SWAT of dates and arrangement as plans are made.

- August 6 upper watershed field trip with Regional Forester to Legacy Roads projects, with possible VIP horseback tour of road-to-trail conversion project (Jeff Chapman to organize)
- July 10 (tentative) field trip to Nalley Island and Skokomish Farms (Keith, Alex, and Mali to organize)
- River float trip (tentative) with Army Corps of Engineers G.I. project staff (Rich and Alex to check with Corps on interest and date)
- Skokomish Grange work party (Jayni Kamin will confer with Grange on ideas)
- September or October field trip to see completed Gibbons/McTaggart project (Patti to organize with Tacoma Power). Mike or Patti will check with Chris

Dunagan on interest in seeing the Gibbons/McTaggart project area before and/or during the construction.

- The Forest Service also wants to have a public field trip to the South Fork large wood project locations along the river. Potentially this could be part of the September/October field trip -- Dean will check on public involvement timeline for the project.